

OUR LIFE, OUR WORK, OUR CHANGE

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A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON.

“All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change comes.”
Job 14:14.

JOB was well near driven to desperation by the fearful torment of his bodily pains, by the exasperating remarks of his friends, and the cutting suggestion of his wife. It is no wonder if he became somewhat impatient. Never were words of complaint more excusable than in the sad case of Job when he cried, “O that You would hide me in the grave!” Everything that could make life bearable had been taken from him, and every evil which could make death desirable came upon him. Yet, after Job had uttered those exclamations, he seems to have been half ashamed of his weakness, and girding up his loins, he argues with himself, reasoning his soul into a cooler, calmer frame. Job looks his life in the face: he perceives that his warfare is severe, but he remembers it is *but once*, and that when once over and the victory won, there will be no more fighting; and therefore he encourages himself to put up with his present sorrows, and even with future evils, be they what they may, and registers this solemn resolution—far more glorious than the resolve of Alexander to conquer the world—to conquer himself, and to abide with patience the will of God. He fixed it steadfastly in his heart, that all his appointed days until a change should come, he would endure the divine decree with constancy of resignation. None among us can afford to cast a stone at the patriarch for sighing and complaining, for we would not act one half as well ourselves.

We are too much at times like Jonah; we turn cowards, and would gladly flee from our work when it becomes arduous or yields us no honor. If we do not seek a ship to take us to Tarshish, we sigh for a seraph to bear us to heaven. This huge Nineveh has made most of us fear in times of depression. I fear that frequently we act like lineal descendants of those children of Ephraim who, being armed and carrying bows, turned back in the day of battle. We shrink as a bone out of joint which slips aside under pressure. We are not only like Jacob, who halted upon one thigh, but we limp upon both legs at times. We are often disinclined for conflict, and pine for rest, crying, “When will the day be over? When shall we be perfectly at ease?” It is against such a spirit as this that we must struggle; and to help us in the struggle, it seemed to me to be good to consider the text now before us; and to that end may God bless it, that we may be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.” “All the days of my appointed time will I wait, till my change comes.”

We shall call your attention this morning, first, to *the aspect of life* which Job gives us; secondly, to *his estimate of our work*; and thirdly, to *his view of the future*.

I. First, let us observe THE ASPECT UNDER WHICH JOB REGARDED THIS MORTAL LIFE. He calls it an “*appointed time*,” or, as the Hebrew has it, “*a warfare*.”

Observe that Job styles our life *a time*. Blessed be God that this present state is not an eternity! Though its conflicts may seem long, they must have an end. We are in the finite state, at present, in which all griefs have their closes and conclusions. Long as the night may last, it must yield in due season to the light of the morning. The winter may drag its weary length along, but the spring is hard upon its heels; the tide may ebb out till nothing remains but leagues of mud, and we lament that all the bright blue deep will vanish, but it is not so, the tide must flow again for God has so decreed. Our whole life is brief indeed, and compared with eternity, a mere span, a hand's-breadth. From the summits of eternity, how, like a flying moment will this transient life appear; the pains of this mortal life will seem to be a mere pin's prick to us when we get into the joys never ending and overflowing; and the toils of this life will be as child's play when we reach the everlasting rest. Let us then, my brothers and sisters, judge

immortal judgment; let us not weigh our troubles in the ill-adjusted scales of this poor human life, but let us use the shekel of eternity. We are born for eternity; and although it is true we have to struggle through this one brief hour of toil and conflict, an hour with our God in glory will make up for it all. "I reckon," said that master of heavenly arithmetic, the apostle Paul, who was never wrong in his reckoning, "that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us." The longest and most sorrowful life is but a "time." Whisper that simple truth of God into the ear of the languishing sufferer; tell this glad truth to the son of sorrow, poor and despised; tell it to every daughter of grief, life is but a *time*; it is not eternity. O mourner, contrast your present sorrows with the griefs of lost spirits to whom there is no time—who are cast away forever—who cannot expect a termination to their bitter griefs, but who see this word written in letters of fire before their weeping eyes, "Forever! Forever! FOREVER! FOREVER!"

Job also calls our life an "*appointed*" time. You know who appointed your days. *You* did not appoint them for yourself, and therefore you can have no regrets about the appointment. Neither did Satan appoint them, for the keys of hell and of death do not hang at his waist—

*"An angel's arm can't cast me to the grave:
Millions of angels cannot keep me there."*

To the almighty God belong the issues from death. He alone can speak the irrevocable word, and bid the spirit return to God who gave it. God alone can wing the shaft that shall end this mortal existence—until He puts His hand to the bow all the archers of earth and hell shall shoot in vain. Our pilgrimage has an appointed beginning and end. In yonder hourglass, which measures your existence, the sands which trickle to the nether globe were all measured into the upper bulb by the divine Hand. There is not a grain of sand too few, nor a grain too many. You shall find that God has appointed with exact wisdom, with profound knowledge, and with irreproachable love all the days and the doings of your life. Remember that you will live out, but not *outlive* your allotted years. You will live up to the last minute, and neither plague, nor pestilence, nor dangers of flood, or field, or battle, can deprive you of the last second which God has measured out to you. But beyond the boundary He appointed you shall not pass, though you take great care and call in the physician—you cannot add a second of time to your determined period. Inexorable death will make no tarrying, but perform his errand promptly when the Master sends him—

*"Then to the dust,
Return you must
Without delay."*

Should not this cheer us—that the appointment of our lot has been made by a loving Father's prudence, and that the days and bounds of our habitation are not left to the winds of chance or to the waves of uncertainty, but are all decreed immutably by our Father who is in heaven? In the volume of the book our life-story is written—in that same volume where the Savior's covenant engagements were recorded.

You will observe, also, dear friends, that Job very wisely speaks of the "*days*" of our appointed time. It is a prudent thing to forbear the burden of life as a whole, and learn to bear it in the parcels into which providence has divided it. Let us live as life comes, namely, by the day. Our God does not trust us with so much life as a month at once—we live as the clock ticks, a second at a time. Is not that a wiser method of living rather than to perplex our heads by living by the month, or by the year? You have no promise for the year—the word of mercy runs, "As your *days* your strength shall be." You are not commanded to pray for supplies by the year, but, "Give us this *day* our daily bread." Said a good man to me the other day who had many troubles, who has borne them manfully to my knowledge, for these 15 or 20 years, when I asked him how his patience had held out—"Ah," he said, "I said to my afflicted wife the other day, when the coals came in, 'It takes several big fellows to bring in the sacks, but yet our little kitchen maid, Mary, has brought the whole ton up from the cellar into our parlor; but she has done it a scuttle-full at a time. She has as surely moved those tons of coal as ever did the wagons when they brought them in, but she has moved them little by little, and done it easily.'" This is how to bear the troubles of life, a day's portion at a time. Wave by wave our trials come, and let us breast them one by one, and not attempt to buffet the whole ocean's billows at once. Let us stand as the brave old Spartan did, in the Thermopylae of the day, and fight the Persians as they come on one by one, thus shall we keep our adversities at bay, and overcome them as they advance in single file; but let us not venture into

the plain amidst the innumerable hordes of Persians, or we shall speedily be swallowed up, and our faith and patience will be overcome. I would gladly live by the day, and work by the day, and suffer by the day till all my days are over, and I see the Ancient of Days in that land where *days* are lost in one eternal day, and the soul swims in seas of joy forever.

I must not fail to remind you of the Hebrew: “All the days of my *warfare* will I wait.” Life is indeed a “warfare,” and just as a man enlists in our army for a term of years, and then his service runs out, and he is free, so every believer is enlisted in the service of life, to serve God till his enlistment is over, and we sleep in death. Our charge and our armor we shall put off together. Brothers and sisters, you are enlisted soldiers, when you believe in Jesus. Let me remind you that you are a soldier, you will be always at war, you will never have a furlough or conclude a treaty. Like the old knights who slept in their armor, you will be attacked even in your rest. There is no part of the journey to heaven which is secure from the enemy, and no moment, not even the sweet rest of the Lord’s Day, when the clarion may not sound. Therefore, prepare yourselves always for the battle. “Put on the whole armor of God,” and look upon life as a continued battle. Be surprised when you do not have to fight; be wonderstruck when the world is peaceful towards you; be astonished when your old corruptions do not rise and assault you. You must travel with your swords always drawn, and you may as well throw away the scabbard, for you will never need it. You are a soldier who must always fight, and by the light of battle you must survey the whole of your life.

Taking these thoughts together as Job’s view of mortal life, what then? Why, beloved, it is but once, as we have already said—we shall serve our God on earth in striving after His glory but once. Let us carry out the engagements of our enlistment honorably. He who enters into Her Majesty’s service for a term of years, if he is an honorable man, resolves that he will act worthily, as long as he is in the ranks. So let it be with us: we shall never enter upon another war; let us wage the present warfare gloriously. We carry in our hands a sword, we have but to use it in one great life-battle, and then it shall be hung up on the wall forever. Let us use our weapon well, that we may not have to resign it, rusty and dishonored, as a memorial of our disgrace. Let us march cheerily to the fight, since it is but once. Let us play the man, and be like David’s mightiest, who feared no risks, but accepted deadly odds, and won and held their own against all comers. Come, beloved, we have an appointed time, and it is running out every hour, let us rejoice to see it go. Our Captain appointed it, He commanded us to stand sentry, or to rush into the front of the battle. Since the time is appointed by our well-beloved King, let us not dishonor His appointment, but in the name of Him who gave us our commission to live and fight, let us war a good warfare, living at the highest bent of our force, and the utmost strength of our being. And since, dear friends, it is the Lord’s war that we are engaged in, we are enlisted under the great Captain of our salvation, who leads us on to sure and certain victory, let us not be discouraged; let not our hearts fail us; let us quit ourselves like men, and be strong, for the Lord our God is with us, and we have the mighty One of Israel to be our Captain. Let us glorify the grace of God while we are permitted to remain on earth to glorify it! Let us be up and at our enemies while there are enemies for us to fight. Let us carve out victory while we have the raw material of conflict to carve. There are no battles to be fought, and no victories to be won in heaven. So now, in this life let us resolve in the name and strength of God the Holy Spirit, with all our force and vigor to glorify God who has appointed us our warfare. We now leave this head to turn to the second, and may God the Holy Spirit bless us in so doing.

II. JOB’S VIEW OF OUR WORK while on earth is that we are to *wait*. “All the days of my appointed time will I *wait*.” The word “wait” is very full of teaching. It contains the whole of the Christian life, if understood in all its various senses. Let us take up a few very briefly.

In the first place, the Christian life should be one of waiting; that is, *setting loose of all earthly things*. Many travelers are among us this morning; they are passing from one town to another, viewing many countries; but if they are only travelers, and are soon to return to their homes, they do not speculate in the various businesses of Lombard Street or Cheapside. They do not attempt to buy large estates and lay them out, and make gold and silver thereby; they know that they are only strangers, and they act as such. They take such interest in the affairs of the country in which they are sojourning as may be becoming in those who are not citizens of it; they wish well to those among whom they sojourn and dwell;

but that is all, for they are going home, therefore, they do not intend to bind themselves with anything that might make it difficult to part from our shores. They know that they are on the wing, and therefore they live like strangers and sojourners. As a Bedouin wandering across the desert, so is a Christian—a bird of passage; a voyager seeking the haven. This is not our rest: it is polluted—

“Sad thought were this to be our home!”

The wisdom of the Christian is to disentangle himself as much as possible from the things of this life. He will act kindly towards the citizens of the country where he is called to dwell, and he will seek their good: still he will remember that he is not as they are. He is an alien among them. He may have to buy and sell in this world, but that is merely as a matter of transient convenience. He neither buys nor sells for eternity; for he has “bought the truth,” and he “sells it not.” He has received God to be His treasure, and his heart and his treasure too he has sent on ahead. On the other side of the river all his joys and all his treasures are to be found. Here he looks upon his earthly joys as things that are lent him—borrowed comforts. If his children die, he does not wonder—he knew that they were not immortal. If his friends are taken away, he is not astonished—he understood that they were born of women, and therefore would die like the rest. If his wealth takes to itself wings, he does not marvel—he knew that it was a bird of passage, and he is not astonished when, like the swallows, it flies elsewhere. He long ago learned that the world is founded on the floods; and therefore when it moves beneath him, he understands that this is the normal state of things, and he is not at all amazed, but rather wonders that the world is not all panic and confusion, since it is so unsubstantial. As Samson shook the Philistine temple, so shall the word of the Lord in the hour of final doom lay all nature prone in one common ruin; and vain is he who boasts of his possessions where all is waiting to be overturned. Brothers and sisters, are you doing so? Some of you professors, I am afraid, are living as though this were your rest. You do not wish to go home, do you? The nest is very comfortable: you have feathered it warmly. You have all that heart could wish. Here you would gladly abide for ages. Ah, well, may this worldliness be cast out of you, and may you be seized with Homesickness, that sweet disease which every true patriot ought to have, an insatiable longing for his dear fatherland. Have you never heard of the Swiss soldiers in the French army, who would fall sick when they heard the music of the songs which reminded them of their native mountains, with their chalets and peasants, and the cowboy’s song? Ill could they rest in sunny France when their hearts were among Helvetia’s rugged hills. Are there no sweet songs of Zion which remind you of that blessed land where our best friends, our kindred dwell, where God our Savior reigns? If we are true citizens of the New Jerusalem, we shall long for that fair country, the home of the elect—

*“Ah, then my spirit faints
To reach the land I love,
The bright inheritance of saints,
Jerusalem above.”*

It is your duty, Christian, and your privilege, to let loose of the things of earth, and say with Job, “All the days of my appointed time I will wait”—like a mere waiter—“till my change come.”

A second meaning of the text, however, is this—we must *wait expecting* to be gone—expecting daily and hourly to be summoned by our Lord. The proper and healthy estate of a Christian is to be anticipating the hour of his departure as near at hand. I have observed a great readiness to depart in many dying saints, but the same readiness ought to characterize living saints also. Our dear friend, Mr. James Smith, whom some of you remember as preaching the word at Park Street, and afterwards at Cheltenham, when I saw him, some little while before his departure, described himself thus: “You have seen a passenger who has gone to the station, taken his ticket, all his luggage brought in, all packed up, strapped, directed; and you have seen him sitting with his ticket in his hand waiting till the train comes up. That,” said he, “is exactly my condition. I am ready to go as soon as my heavenly Father pleases to come for me.” And is not that how we should always live—waiting for the Lord’s appearing? Mr. Whitefield used to say of his well-known order and regularity, “I like to go to bed feeling that if I were to die tonight, there is not so much as a pair of my gloves out of their proper place.” No Christian ought to live without having his will made, and his estate put in proper condition, in case he should die suddenly. That hint may be useful to some of you who have neglected to set your house in order. No Christian should live expecting to live another day. You cannot reckon upon an hour. You should rather be so

ready, that if you were to walk out of this tabernacle and fall down dead upon the steps, it would not make any derangement in your affairs, because you are equally ready for life or death. One of our beloved sisters this week was walking down Paternoster Row—her mourning friends sit here, but they have no cause to mourn. Sudden faintness came over her: she was taken into a shop, and water was offered to her, but she could not drink; no, she was already drinking of the water of the river of life that flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb. In a moment she closed her eyes to the sorrows of earth, and opened them to the joys of heaven. When we visit the graves of those who have died in Christ, we ought not to weep for them; or, if we weep at all it should be with the regret that we are not yet admitted to the same reward. To “die daily” is the business of Christians. It is greatly wise to talk about our last hours, to make ourselves familiar with the grave. Our venerable forefathers had a strange habit of placing on the dressing table a death’s head as a *memento mori*—either a real skull, or else an ornament fashioned in the form of it—to remind them of their end; yet, so far as I can gather, they were happy men and happy women, and none the less so because they familiarized themselves with death. A genuine Puritan, perhaps, never lived a day without considering the time when he would put off the garments of clay, and enter into rest; and these were the happiest and holiest of people, while this thoughtless generation which banishes the thought of dying is wretched with all its hollow pretense of mirth. I exhort you, brothers and sisters, wait! Wait always for the trumpet call! Live as looking for the Lord to come and take you from this mortal state, waiting for the convoy of angels to take you to the city of the blessed, in the land of the hereafter.

Nor is this all, waiting means *enduring with patience*. We are put into this world for one appointed time of suffering, and in sacred patience we must abide steadfast the heat of the furnace. The life of many Christians is a long martyrdom—they are to bear it patiently. “Here is the patience of the saints.” Many believers go from one sickness to another, from one loss to another; but herein they fulfill their life’s design, if through abundant grace they learn to bear their woes without a murmur, and to wait their appointed time without repining.

Serving is also another kind of waiting. The Lord Jesus gives us plain directions as to service in the parable recorded in the 17th chapter of Luke: “But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, go and sit down to dinner? And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird yourself and serve me, till I have eaten and drunk; and afterwards you shall eat and drink?” In this world we are to wait upon the Lord Jesus, running His errands, nursing His children, feeding His lambs, fighting His foes, repairing the walls of His vineyard, doing anything and everything which He may please to give us. And mark you, this is to be attended with perseverance, for Job says, “*All the days of my appointed time will I wait.*” He would not be a servant sometimes, and then skulk home in idleness at another season, as if his term of service were ended. Every saint should say, “I will wait upon You, my God, as long as I live; as long as I have breath to draw, it shall be spent for You. So long as I have life to spend here below, I will spend it and be spent in Your service.” This should be the spirit of the Christian all his days, to his last day. Waiting still, like a holy man of God among the American Indians, who, when he lay dying, was observed to be teaching a poor little Indian to read his letters, and he said, “What a mercy, now I am laid aside from preaching, that I can teach this poor little child to read his letters; God has still something for me to do, and my prayer is that I may not live an hour after I cannot do anything for Christ.” May we be in just such a state of heart!

Moreover, to close this aspect of Christian life, we should be *desirous to be called home*. No Christian ought to desire to leave the field of battle till the victory is won, nor to leave the field till the plow has gone up to the headland for the last time, but still he may desire to be at home, and must desire it because of the love which he bears his Lord. I cannot understand you if you do not sometimes sing that hymn—

*“My heart is with Him on His throne,
And ill can brook delay;
Each moment listening for the voice,
‘Rise up, and come away.’”*

Do you love your husband, wife, if you do not really wish to see him? Do you love your home, child, if you do not wish for the time when the school shall break up, and you shall leave for home? Oh, it is a weary world, even though our Lord makes it bearable by the sweet glimpses we get of Him through the telescope of faith, when He throws the lattices aside and shows Himself. Yet these sweets only cause us to long for more. I tell you heavenly food on earth is a hunger-making thing; it makes you desire fresh supplies. You cannot sip from the waters of divine grace on earth without longing to lie down at the wellhead and drink your full of glory. Do you ever have a heart-sickness after heaven? Do you ever feel the cords that bind you to Christ tugging at your heart strings to draw you nearer? Oh, yes! You must feel this; and if you are mixing up these longings to be with Christ, these expectations to depart, with a patient endurance of the divine Will, you have hit upon Job's true idea of life. May you not only have the idea, but carry it out practically; may all believers do so to the praise and glory of divine grace.

III. Now comes JOB'S ESTIMATE OF THE FUTURE. It is expressed in this word, "Till my change come." He refers to the two great changes which he views at one glance—the change of death when we shall "shuffle off this mortal coil"—the change of resurrection when we shall put on our imperishable garments—shall be girt about with eternal gladness.

Beloved, let it be observed that in a certain sense death and resurrection are not a change to a Christian—they are not a change as to his *identity*. The same man who lives here will live forever. The same saint who serves God on earth will wake up in the image of Christ to serve Him day and night in His temple, and that identity will exist not only with regard to the soul, but the body; "My eyes shall see Him and not another." These very eyes which have wept for sin shall see the King in His beauty; and these hands which here have served the Lord, shall embrace Him in His glory. Do not think that death will destroy the identity of the resurrection body: it will be as much the same as the full-blown flower is the same as the seed out of which it grew. There will be a mighty development, but it will still be the same. *It* is sown a natural body, and the same *it* is raised a spiritual body. There will also be to the regenerate no change as to his vitality. We are quickened now by the Life of Christ, which is the same Life that will quicken us in heaven; the incorruptible seed which lives and abides forever. "He that believes on the Son *has* everlasting life." He has it now—the same life which he is to live in heaven, where it will be more developed, more glorious, but still the same.

There will be no difference in the Christian's objective in life when he gets to heaven. He lives to serve God here—he will live for the same end and aim there. Here holiness is his delight; it shall be his delight there. And his occupation will not change, either—he served his Master like a waiting servant during his days on earth—he will be taken up to serve Him day and night in His temple.

And the Christian will not experience a very great change as to his companions. Here on earth the excellent of the earth are all his delight; Christ Jesus his Elder Brother abides with him; the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, is resident within him; he communes with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ. The fact is, heaven and earth to the Christian are the same house, only the one is the lower floor, and the other is the upper story; the one is so low and near the ground, that sometimes the water of trouble rushes into it, and the windows of the rooms below are so dark, that but a small degree of the light of heaven ever enters them, and the view is contracted. But the other rooms upstairs have a fair view, and the sun shines always through their windows, and they are furnished with a matchless skill; but still it is the same house. Heaven is thus but a slight change in some respects, yet it *is* a change, and we shall see that readily enough.

To the Christian it will be a change *of place*. He will be away from the dull and coarse materialism of this defiled, sin-stricken earth where thorns and thistles grow, and he will arrive at the place where the inhabitants shall no more say, "I am sick"—the paradise of God, where flowers wither not. He will change his *neighborhood*. He is vexed here with the ungodly conversation of the wicked; he often finds his neighbors to be like the men of Sodom, exceedingly vile; but there angels shall be fellow citizens with him, and he shall commune with the spirits of the just made perfect. No vain discourse shall vex his ears; no sin shall come before him to disgust his mind; he shall not be a stranger in a strange land, but a child at home. There, too, will be a great change as to his *outward circumstances*. No sweat will need to be wiped from his brow, no tear from his eyes. There are no funeral knells to be heard in heaven; no

open graves to be filled with the dead. In heaven there is no poverty, no proud man's scorn, no oppressor's heavy heel, no persecutor's fiery brand; but there "the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest."

Especially will it be a change to the Christian as to that which will be *within him*. No body of this death to hamper him; no infirmities to cramp him; no wandering thoughts to disturb his devotion; no birds to come down upon the sacrifice, needing to be driven away. As the body shall be free from the corruption which engenders death, so shall the soul be free from the corruption which engenders strife against the new law which is in the believer's members. He shall be perfectly free from sin. There will be this change, too, that he will be delivered from that dog of hell who once howled in his ears—as the world will be afar off, and cannot tempt, so Satan will be afar off, and cannot molest. A change indeed it will be, in a special manner, to some. Have you ever visited the hospital, and sat by the side of the poor Christian woman who has lain upon that bed for months—her hearing almost gone, her sight failing, scarcely able to breathe, palpitations of the heart, life a protracted agony? Oh, what a change from the bed of languishing to the throne of God! What a difference between that hospital, with its sounds of sickness and of sorrow, and yonder New Jerusalem and the shout of them who triumph, the song of them who feast! What an escape from the dying bed to the living glory—from the glazing eyes and the wasting frame, and the cold death sweat, to the glory which excels, and the harps of angels, and the songs of the glorified! What a change, too, for some of the poor, for some of you sons of penury who are here this morning, from that hard work which scarcely knows a pause, from those weary fingers, and that flying needle, and that palpitating heart; from that sleep which gives but little rest, because the toil begins so soon that it seems to pervade and injure the sleep itself. What an exchange from that naked room, that unfurnished table! From that cup which, so far from running over, you find it difficult to fill! From all those various pains and woes that penury is heir to, to the wealth and happiness of paradise! What a change for you, to the mansions of the blessed, and the crowns of immortality, and the company of the princes of the blood royal, with whom you shall dwell forever! And what a change, again, for the persecuted! I know how a father's angry words break your heart, and how a husband's cruel remarks grieve you; but you shall soon escape from it all. The jeer of the workshop sometimes reminds you of the cruel mocking you have often read of. What a change for you to be in sweet company where friends shall cheer and make you glad! My brothers and sisters, what a leap it must have been for the martyrs—right away from their stakes to their thrones! What a change for the men who rotted in dungeons till the moss grew on their eyelids—to the immortal beauty of the fairest of the fair, midst the bright ones doubly bright! What a change!

Right well, good patriarch, did you use the term, for it is the greatest of all changes. If you require a commentary upon this word "change," turn to the 15th chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians, and read it through; we read it in your hearing just now. You will there see that all that needs to be changed will be changed. All that must be changed to make the believer perfectly blessed will be transformed and transfigured by the Master. If you desire a glimpse of what we shall be in heaven, remember the face of Moses when it glowed so that he covered it with a veil! Remember Stephen's face when they looked upon him and saw it looked as if it were the face of an angel! Remember our Lord transfigured till He was whiter than any fuller could make Him! Those were transient gleams and glimpses of the beatific glory which shall surround every one of the blessed before long.

My brothers and sisters, perhaps to you it will be a sudden change. Last Sunday our sister sat here; this Sunday she sits there in heaven! Others, too, have gone this week to their Home. I suppose week by week about two in this congregation die almost as regularly as I come into this pulpit. So you melt away one after the other, and you disappear; but blessed thought if, when you disappear, it is to shine forever in heaven! Well, let the change come suddenly. There is much to be envied in sudden death. I never could understand why it should be put in the litany, "From sudden death, good Lord, deliver us." O brothers and sisters, sudden death may God send to us so long as we are but prepared, for then we miss the pain of sickness in the gradual breaking down of the frame. It must be desirable, a choice favor which God only gives to some of His peculiarly beloved ones—a thing to pray for, not to pray against. Well it may be sudden. There is this about it, however, that if we are in Christ, let it come suddenly, we

are fully prepared, “For you are complete in Him.” “He who believes has everlasting life.” “He who lives and believes in Me shall never die.” Death has lost all its terror to you who are in Christ. And there is one very sweet thought to my mind, and that though a change, it is the last change. Glory be to God, there will be no more of it, once changed into the likeness of Christ, and there will be no more changes, but immortality forever!—

“Forever with the Lord.”

We may well add—

“Amen! So let it be!”

O you who have no hope in Jesus, death must be to you a gloomy thing indeed! It puts out your candle and leaves you forever in the dark. But you who have a good hope through divine grace, and have built your house upon the rock, you may joyfully look forward to the end of your appointed days, waiting until your change comes, blessing God that it will come in its appointed time, and that when it comes it will be a change for the better to you in all respects—a change which shall never be followed by another change, a change which shall make you like your Lord forever and ever!

May God give His blessing! Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—JOB 14; 1 CORINTHIANS 15:42-58.

Adapted from *The C. H. Spurgeon Collection*, Version 1.0, Ages Software.

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